# Kim Il Sung and His Mentor

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# PREFACE

Many great persons have been recorded in history as examples of respecting their teachers and mentors. But none of them was like Kim Il Sung, President of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, who bestowed affection and benevolence on his mentor throughout his life.

Kang Ryang Uk was the teacher in charge of Kim Il Sung's class at Changdok School.

Kim Il Sung had attended the school for only about two years before he set out on the road of the revolution to achieve Korea's liberation, but he respected him as his mentor throughout his life. Under Kim Il Sung's warm care, Kang Ryang Uk made considerable contributions to his country and fellow people at important posts of the state for 40 years since the country's liberation.

In the days before Korea's liberation, his dreams as an educator, his dignity as a human and his freedom of religious belief was trampled under Japanese military occupation; after the country's liberation, he glorified his life and devoted all his energy to the prosperity of his country thanks to Kim Il Sung's benevolent care.

The relations between Kim Il Sung and Kang Ryang Uk are an illustrative example of noble moral obligations as well as a dignified life.

**Kang Ryang Uk**

(December 7, 1904 – January 9, 1983)

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# 1. ON THE THRESHOLD OF NATION BUILDING

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## Dawn of Life

Several decades of vicious Japanese colonial rule came to an end and thunderous cheers of the Korean people resounded in the country, ushering in a new dawn on the peninsula.

Hot tears ran down the faces of the people who had been writhing under the tyranny of Japanese imperialism.

Kang Ryang Uk greeted the liberation in Pyongyang. When he heard the surrender of Japan on the radio, he could not believe his ears. The news was too tremendous to swallow. He was stunned for a while, and then ran to his church and rang the bell, which was an outburst of his emotions.

In a jubilant atmosphere, the Korean people eagerly waited for General Kim Il Sung, the saviour of their country, to return home.

People from various strata in Pyongyang and South Phyongan Province organized a preparatory committee for welcoming General Kim Il Sung. They arranged a platform at the Pyongyang Railway Station Plaza and made other necessary preparations.

Taking pride in the fact that the General had been born at Mangyongdae in their county, the people in Taedong County formed a similar committee of their own with the hope that they would be





the first to greet him.

Hong Myong Hui, Ryo Un Hyong, Ho Hon and other celebrities formed such a committee and made preparations for a grand welcoming ceremony for him.

Kang Ryang Uk was also eagerly looking forward to his return home, to Pyongyang.

Shortly after liberation some people advised him to go to Seoul which was to be under the control of American troops, saying that it was clear that religious believers would be repressed in the north where a communist power was to appear. However, he did not follow their advice. It was not because he aspired after communism or sympathized with it.

As a matter of fact, his memories of Kim Il Sung were dear to him. But what kept him in Pyongyang was his boundless reverence for him who had saved the nation from ruin.

On the other hand, he entertained worries about his future at the back of his mind. It was natural since many people he had dealt with were biased against clergymen like him.

In mid-October 1945 he was in Songchon County, South Phyongan Province, attending a revival service which the Songchon Parish held once or twice a year to promote the religious faith, expand its influence and consolidate its material foundations. That service was attended by about 1 000 religious believers in the area, including priests, elders and other clerics.

On the fifth day of the service, his eldest son came, and told him to return to Pyongyang quickly, saying that Kim Il Sung wanted to see him.

Although he was usually calm and reticent, Kang could not contain himself for excitement that day.

All the memories of his first meeting with Kim Il Sung 20 years previously came flooding back.

At that time he was a teacher at Changdok School.

It was a private school Kang Ton Uk, Kim Il Sung's maternal grandfather, and other patriotic-minded people had established at Chilgol in 1908 to teach the Korean children their mother tongue, history and geography of their country and instil the sense of patriotism into them.

One day in April 1923, Kang Ton Uk, the then school superintendent, came to the teachers' room, bringing a teenager boy with him. The boy was Kim Il Sung who had travelled 400 kilometres all alone from Badaogou in China to Mangyongdae to study in Korea, true to his father's intention that a Korean man must know his country well.

As the superintendent introduced the boy to the teachers and told him to follow the procedures for enrollment, they examined the boy.

There was something extraordinary about him–wide forehead indicative of magnanimity and generosity, sparkling eyes, sunny face with impressive dimples and dignified bearing.





Kang Ryang Uk never imagined his meeting with the boy would change his life so much.

As the boy bowed deep to the teachers with a smile, the superintendent told them that the boy had travelled all the way from China by himself to study in Korea. Hardly concealing his surprise, Kang Ryang Uk asked the superintendent in which grade he would be joining.

The superintendent told him that his grandson had graduated from a four-year primary school course and said to himself which grade would be appropriate for him. Then he asked Kang Ryang Uk to give him a test first.

After asking his name, date of birth and progress of studies, Kang examined his performance records, which showed that he had won top honours in all subjects and had been exemplary in manners.

Then he put out *Mother Tongue Reader* for the 4$^{th}$ and 5$^{th}$ grades. The 5$^{th}$-grade *Mother Tongue Reader* was not easy as it was written in combination with Korean and Chinese characters, but the boy read it fluently.

Kang, then, selected some arithmetic questions from the 5$^{th}$-grade math textbook, which he also solved without a hitch.

All the teachers in the room were surprised at his wonderful performance.

Kang found himself liking the boy very much. He suggested to the superintendent that the boy be enrolled in the 5$^{th}$-grade class

which was under his charge.

In this way Kang Ryang Uk became the teacher of Kim Il Sung.

Later President Kim Il Sung wrote in his memoirs, titled, *With the Century*, "As I had hoped I joined the class of Mr. Kang Ryang Uk."

As he recalled those days, his heart was pounding with impressive memories.

Later he learned that he was among those whom Kim Il Sung had wanted to meet soon after his triumphant return home.

Childhood memories are dear to everyone, but memories of Changdok School and his teacher Kang and Changdok School were dearer to Kim Il Sung, who had travelled all the way from an alien land to know his motherland and feel its pulse.

That was why he sent for Kang Ryang Uk immediately after he delivered a speech at the mass rally held to welcome his triumphal return.

He enquired about his whereabouts through several channels and sent a person to his family to learn how they were getting along. On learning that he was in Songchon attending a revival service, he immediately sent for him.

Kang Ryang Uk also missed his former student so much that he had an urge to visit him after the rally, but he suppressed the urge and went down to Songchon.

It was because he had thought that he had done nothing worthy





for the country and had no face to meet his former student, when the latter had achieved national liberation after he had crossed the Amnok River in his teens with a firm determination that he would never come back before Korea became independent.

However, on hearing from his son that Kim Il Sung was calling him, he decided to go to Pyongyang immediately.

His mind was already in Pyongyang where Kim Il Sung was.

On October 18, 1945, he was led to a place. As he went into the yard with deep emotions and anticipation, a tall man approached him, saying, "How are you, sir? It's me, Song Ju at Changdok School, Mr. Kang,"

With that sunny face, those dimples that would appear whenever he smiled, he was surely Kim Song Ju who had used to be a star at Changdok School. (Kim Song Ju was Kim Il Sung's childhood name.)

"General…," Kang's voice trailed off, cracking in emotion.

Kim Il Sung went closer to him and hugged him.

Overwhelmed by emotion, Kang Ryang Uk could not find proper words to greet him.

"It's been a long time. You have not changed much, though. Let us get into the room," Kim Il Sung said cordially, guiding him to his office with his hands in his own.

After offering him a seat, Kim Il Sung said he was very pleased to meet him and enquired after his health.

On hearing Kang's answer that he was in good health, he enquired after his family and asked about his other teachers and schoolmates at Changdok School.

Then he recalled, saying: You are a man I have missed most since I left Chilgol; I still remember you telling the stories about famous patriotic generals during history classes; you used to arrange wonderful sports competitions between Changdok and Taephyong schools; and you used to conduct physical training lessons in such an interesting way that we students eagerly looked forward to them.

Indeed, Changdok School was his dear alma mater which had taught him things about Korea, and his days at the school were unforgettable days when he etched on his mind the miserable images of his country and people moaning under Japanese rule.

When Kang Ryang Uk wondered at his remembering of those days, Kim Il Sung said that when he had been waging an armed struggle in the mountains he had always thought about the country trampled underfoot by the Japanese imperialists, and that whenever he had thought about the country, Changdok School would always come to his mind. Then he added he could not forget his days at the school, and asked his former teacher how he had been getting along since then.

He answered that he had studied at Pyongyang Theological School after Kim Il Sung left Changdok School, and had been a priest since then, saying, "While you were waging an arduous





struggle in the mountains to win back the country, I lived a quiet life in church. I am really sorry."

Telling that he did not need to feel that way and he supposed he had become a Christian because he hated Japanese imperialism, Kim Il Sung continued: The Japanese imperialists persecuted the Korean people mercilessly and our people waged an uninterrupted struggle against them, shedding blood, but in vain, because they failed to find a genuine way for independence; it could not be a sin for the religious believers to entrust their destiny of the country to the God and pray for the country; such people can be called patriotic-minded and conscientious religious believers.

He recalled that when his father, Kim Hyong Jik, had been teaching at Myongsin School in Kangdong County, he had been arrested by the Japanese police on a charge of subversive activities against Japan, and that at that time the religious people in the area of Tongsam-ri, Koup Sub-county, had gathered and prayed for more than a month for the defeat of the Japanese and his release.

Telling that many religious believers had joined the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland which embraced the patriotic forces from various social strata, and many of them had fallen in action during their struggle against Japanese imperialism, he recalled Pak In Jin, leader of the Chondoist faith in South Hamgyong Province.

Though he had been a religious believer, Pak had educated young

Chondoists under his influence and sent them to the Korean People's Revolutionary Army, as well as aiding the guerrilla army materially and spiritually. When he had been arrested by the Japanese police he had been put under brutal torture, but he had not abandoned his patriotic principles until the last moment of his life.

He stopped talking as if he were deeply wrapped in his memories. After a while, he said Pak's exploits would remain long in history. He continued that the fact that Kang Ryang Uk had believed in Christianity in the past should not be called into question and what was more important was his start of a new life in liberated Korea.

After explaining the situation prevailing in the country, he said: We must build a new, prosperous and democratic country in liberated Korea as soon as possible; this cannot be achieved only with the efforts of an individual political party or person; it can be achieved only when all the people aspiring after nation building are closely united as one transcending the differences in property and education status and political and religious affiliation.

Then he added that when he was delivering a speech on his return home a few days earlier, he called upon all the people to contribute to building the country, those with strength offering strength, those with knowledge contributing knowledge and those with money donating money.

Kang Ryang Uk was moved by his magnanimous will to join hands with anyone who truly aspired after the prosperity of the





country and people, irrespective of his or her political view, religious belief or property status.

Kim Il Sung went on saying: Because you are well-educated and popular among religious people as a priest, you can do many things; as there are many religious believers in Korea, it is important to closely rally them and make them contribute to nation building; those who actively turn out to build a new, democratic Korea can be called patriots of today when the country has been liberated; all the religious people should proactively engage in the building of a new country along with other people.

Asking Kang to exert himself to encourage Christians to sincerely work for the good of the country and people, Kim Il Sung said that they both should meet often and consult with each other for work.

Deeply moved by Kim Il Sung's great trust in him who was an ordinary clergyman, Kang Ryang Uk said to Kim Il Sung: "Thank you. I will take your trust in me as your request for all our Christians to follow the path of patriotism to the last, and I will devote my all to nation building."

October 18, 1945 was the most significant day for Kang Ryang Uk in that it signalled the dawn of his new life.

## Leading Him along the Path of Patriotism

After Korea's liberation there appeared so many isms and doctrines, confusing people. Self-acclaimed revolutionaries and independence fighters held lectures, rallies, interviews, outdoor meetings and the like, at which they advocated a bourgeois republic or proletarian dictatorship at the top of their voices.

Something like the People's United Front, Paekui Youth League, Women's Christian Association or Workers' Council was formed overnight, and they made a great fuss, putting up posters and placards.

In this vortex of disorder and confusion, Kang Ryang Uk affiliated himself with the Democratic Party, persuaded by its head, Jo Man Sik. For Jo, who had disguised himself as a patriot after liberation and was trying hard to win over businesspeople, merchants and Christians, Kang was a man whom he could not brush aside when he considered his influence over the Christian society.

Once he had advocated patriotism while working as the principal of Osan School and director general of the newspaper *Joson Ilbo*, but he turned his coat and advocated non-violence





and non-resistance, called a "legitimate patriotic struggle," after he had seen independence champions dying or maimed behind bars.

An Chang Ho, one of the celebrated patriots, had put forward the theory of the renovation of individual characters, self-cultivation and building up of strength, asserting that Korea's independence should be won back through the development of education and industry. Jo Man Sik regarded An's theory as the single best option for him to live a comfortable life without losing his face as a patriot, and when some nationalists launched a campaign to encourage the Koreans to use Korean-made goods under the slogan "Let us live with our own things!" after the March First Popular Uprising, Jo became an active leader of the campaign.

By doing so, he could cover his cowardice, but not his true colour as a pseudo-patriot.

As Japanese imperialism intensified suppression on the Korean people, he unhesitatingly abandoned the last shred of his conscience. Claiming that when Japan had swallowed Korea, "lard," there was no way to bring it back out of its stomach and that the tide had already turned against Korea, he made no scruples to endorse Japan's claim that "Japan and Korea are one" and "Japan and Korea have the same ancestors" and make speeches and write articles advising the Korean students and other young men to join the Japanese army.

Kim Il Sung was fully aware of Jo's career. But hoping that he would repent of his past wrongdoings and actively turn out in the

nation-building effort, he met him several times and explained to him that in order to build a democratic, independent and sovereign state, all the patriotic forces that loved their country and nation and aspired after democracy should unite under the banner of the democratic national united front.

On the contrary, Jo dreamed of establishing a bourgeois republic and tried covertly to make the Democratic Party opposed to the Communist Party.

Kang also knew Jo's career to a certain extent, but he was not able to see through his insidious designs partly because of his ideological immaturity, but also because he himself was a Christian clergyman just like Jo.

The situation in Korea was very complicated after its liberation.

At the instigation of the US imperialists reactionaries started riots and spread groundless rumours across the country so as to create social unrest and hinder the Korean people's effort to build an independent, sovereign state.

Meanwhile, political swindlers who had infiltrated local government organs under the guise of patriots or independence fighters were plotting to damage the prestige of the people's government and alienate the masses of the people from it.

While pretending to support the Communist Party in others' presence, Jo was secretly trying to win the religious believers





and nationalists over to his side, arranging this meeting or that at which he widely advertised his past "patriotic records" and incited hostile sentiments against the Communist Party.

On October 27, 1945, Kim Il Sung met Kang Ryang Uk again.

That day he told Kang: I did not take account of Jo's past, but instead I advised him on several occasions to join hands with us; I did so not because I did not know his true colours or had any great expectations from him, but because I wanted to have as many people as possible take the right path; it is necessary to awaken the Christians and rally them, except a handful of diehards, under the banner of the democratic national united front by educating them; some Christians are heavily inclined to anti-communism and worship of America and not pleased very much with what we are doing because they have been influenced by Jo Man Sik; as a matter of fact, there are some hostile elements among them, but I think most of them are doing so because they are not awakened.

"You are right. Some Christians now think that the communists will repress religious believers because they do not like religion," replied Kang affirmatively.

Kim Il Sung said: We do not restrict or deny the right to religious belief nor discriminate the religious people politically or socially; this stand of ours will remain invariable in the future, too; there are many Christians in Korea; Pyongyang is the first

in the order of their numbers; it is necessary to give the religious believers a correct understanding of our justifiable work for building a democratic Korea by enlisting progressive and influential elders and other priests; you are popular among religious believers, so it will be easy for you to get along with them and they will believe in you; if we launch an active offensive, we can awaken many believers and influence not only Christians but also people of the propertied class; I advise you to persevere with the education of Jo Man Sik to bring him back to the path of patriotism.

That day Kang Ryang Uk was moved once again by Kim Il Sung who was trying his best to help even a man with unsavoury past to take the path of patriotism.

Later, together with influential elders and other priests, he went deep among the people from various social strata as well as Christians, and launched proactive information and publicity work.

As a result, they could lift many of them who were under the influence of the Democratic Party from illusion about Jo Man Sik, and gave them a new understanding of the Communist Party.

Such ideological change among Christians had a great impact on the formation of the democratic national united front.

Kang, however, was haunted by concern that the Democratic Party might end up opposing patriotism and democracy owing to the manoeuvres of Jo and his clique, who grew ever more inclined to imperialists as the days went by.





He visited Jo, and earnestly advised him to join the democratic national united front. But Jo turned a deaf ear to his advice.

Having decided that he could not mingle with such a man, he resolutely broke with Jo.

Afterwards, a conference of activists of the Democratic Party expelled Jo and his clique from the party by reflecting the opinion of the overwhelming majority of its members, who had come to realize their true colours. And the Democratic Party formed a new central committee with progressive personages, thus turning into a truly democratic party. On January 29, 1946, it joined other political parties and social organizations in publishing a joint statement on establishing a unified democratic provisional government.

With this as a momentum, the patriotic and democratic forces from various strata were rallied under the banner of the democratic national united front, and all the democratic political parties and social organizations joined hands in the struggle for building a new Korea.

Witnessing these events, Kang Ryang Uk thought:

Jo Man Sik is a Christian and me, too. But whereas I have taken the path of patriotism, he has persisted in going against the stream of patriotism. Patriotism and treachery…. It was because the great man guided me with his genuine love for the nation that I could take the path of genuine patriotism.

## Recovering from Sorrows

The winter rolled back, heralding the spring of 1946, the first year after Korea's liberation.

Ice blocks floating on the Taedong decreased in number, and willows along rivers and streams developed catkins, filling the minds of the people with a hope for the future.

But the spring of that year did not bring only beautiful dreams, hope and merry laughter with it.

Spring is called a season of promise. But the Korean people learned that they could not expect anything without sweat, tears, pains and devoted efforts, and that the spring of that year would be accompanied by a fierce conflict between patriotism and treachery.

Entering the year, the imperialists and their lackeys grew even more vicious in their manoeuvres to disrupt the building of a democratic, independent and sovereign state in Korea. As part of their moves, they resorted to terrorism against patriotic personages who were enthusiastic about building a new Korea. They went to the length of making attempts on Kim Il Sung's life.

On March 1, 1946, South Phyongan Province hosted a mass rally of its citizens on the Pyongyang Railway Station Plaza to mark the 27th anniversary of March First Popular Uprising. When the





paraders were marching in the plaza, holding placards and banners and shouting slogans calling for an agrarian reform, a hand grenade was thrown from nowhere to the rostrum where Kim Il Sung was standing.

Kang Ryang Uk was so infuriated at the news that he could not go to sleep that night.

He prayed to God, "You cursed Cain for killing his brother Abel, my God. Why, then, don't you punish those who dared do evil to the leader respected by the entire nation? How could you let such scums swagger on this land? Please save him. He is the lifeline of the Korean nation."

On the day following the mass rally, Kim Il Sung called him to his office. He greeted him cordially and offered him a seat. Then he informed him of the terrible event that had happened the day before and other reckless moves by reactionaries.

Kim Il Sung said to Kang in a voice full of anxiety: You'd better sharpen vigilance more than ever before; when I visited your home the other day, I had some misgivings about the location of your house and its surroundings; I had a house selected in a safe place, so you'd better move there soon.

Kim Il Sung concerned himself first with the safety of Kang and other officials when his own safety was under threat.

He had dropped in on Kang's family who had moved to a new house in Pyongyang. Looking round the house, he had

asked the host how many rooms it had and if the heating system worked well.

On his way back, he had been harassed by an inexplicable anxiety about the solitary house which was located near a church on a hillock with no neighbours.

In those days reactionaries were getting more frantic in their moves. They regarded Kang as a "red priest" and were eagerly watching for a chance to teach him a good lesson.

Later Kim Il Sung told an official: When I visited Mr. Kang's, I found his house's location is not good; so I advised him to move to a place of safety; but as he is a frugal and upright man, he would not follow my advice; you should find a house in a safe location in the central part of the city.

When the official reported him a few days later that he had obtained a suitable house, Kim Il Sung took measures of renovating it.

This was why he called Kang that day. He urged him to move to the house.

Moved by Kim Il Sung's concern for his safety, he said to Kim Il Sung gratefully: "Thank you very much for your concern for my safety, General. But don't worry. I don't think they will harm me. I am merely a man of religion."

But Kim Il Sung dug his heels in, and said: You did not give up your patriotic principles and adhered to national conscience





even under the wicked suppression by the Japanese; I advise you to move partly because I respect you and also because I want to take precautions against the reactionaries' possible attempts on your life; you are an important official of the state; you'd better go and see the house and move as soon as possible if it is to your liking; if you move to the house, I will visit you; I once again ask you to move.

However, thinking reactionaries would do nothing to harm a simple man of religion, Kang put off moving to the house from day to day until something terrible happened.

One day in mid-March, he met some priests who had come to Pyongyang on religious affairs. They talked about the agrarian reform till late at night at his home.

The agrarian reform law, proclaimed on March 5, 1946, was of great significance in promoting the overall national economy by eradicating once and for all the feudal land ownership system which had fettered the Korean peasants with merciless exploitation and oppression, in realizing their centuries-old dream for having their own land and in developing the agricultural productivity rapidly.

Praising Kim Il Sung for his truly people-oriented politics, the priests expressed their determination to devote themselves to nation building and discussed the ways how they could do so.

At dead of night he made the bed for the guests in his room

and went to the other room to sleep together with his family members.

About half an hour later, he heard the deafening sound of an explosion and gunshots, and jumped up instinctively. He was taken aback at the sight in front of him: the room was filled with suffocating smoke and littered with broken pieces of furniture; the family members were lying in a pool of blood, the eldest son and daughter already dead and his wife wounded on the head by a bullet. He groped his way to the room where his guests had been sleeping, only to find that the priest from Jongju had been killed and the one from Hwangju fallen unconscious with fatal wounds. Kang felt the blood spilling from a wound.

Who the devil did this?

Although he was a priest who preached charity and philanthropy, he could not restrain the burning hatred at the death of his own children and fellow priests who had discussed the ways for nation building only some minutes before. He was remorseful for not having paid serious heed to Kim Il Sung's sincere advice to move to a new place and remain vigilant.

On receiving the report about the terrorist attack on Kang Ryang Uk's house, Kim Il Sung immediately took measures for moving his family to the new house and curing the wounded.

Then, on March 18, 1946, he visited Kang's new home together





with his wife Kim Jong Suk, the anti-Japanese war heroine.

He expressed condolences to Kang for his loss and apologized for his belated visit before enquiring after Mrs. Kang's wound and advising her to go and see a doctor before it was too late.

Kang Ryang Uk said apologetically to Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Suk that this was all his fault because he had not listened to their warning.

Then Kim Il Sung said in a voice edged with grievance and anger: I am so sorry for your loss of your dear children; even though the country has been liberated, the situation within and without is still complicated; regarding you who are active in building a new, democratic Korea as a thorn in their side, the terrorists spread false rumours against you and went to the extreme of throwing grenades to your house and killed your son and daughter as well as a priest; we cannot relax our guard in such circumstances; the enemy is trying to discourage our people and hinder their advance through their terrorist acts and wanting them to give up their advance; the enemy is cunning and wicked; they resort to murder, arson and all other conceivable means for achieving their reactionary aims; that was why we advised you several times to move to a place of safety and post a sentry; I am mortified more at the fact that it was something that we could fully have checked in advance.

Looking at the agonizing priest, Kim Il Sung continued: You

should not give way to grief over the loss of your children; the enemy wants you to do so; you might face a harsher ordeal in the future, but you should not be disheartened but stay firmer; when we were fighting in the mountains, we lost many comrades-in-arms, who had shared weal and woe with us; they were all in their prime; whenever a man fell in action, our hearts were broken with grief; we, however, never gave way to grief, but would change sorrow into hate and fight the enemy more courageously; we have nothing to fear, however frantic the enemy might be in their moves; when the enemy pounces upon us, we must respond to them with a counterblow; I was told that some Christians are vacillating or have become disheartened in the face of the recent mishap; I hope it is not the case with you.

It was only then when Kang realized what he had to do.

That day Kim Il Sung gave him a pistol before leaving.

There was a story behind it. Nervous about the situation in which the reactionaries' terrorist attack against progressive figures was increasing in number and some suspicious people were sometimes prowling around his house, his eldest son obtained a pistol for him. But when she learned about this, the priest's wife persuaded him to surrender it to a security organ, saying that a pistol was the last thing for a priest to possess. That was what had happened before his home was attacked.

After Kim Il Sung handed the pistol over to him, Kim Jong Suk





advised him to carry it all the time.

Whenever an opportunity arose since then, Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Suk tried their best to relieve him of the sorrow and encourage him. Thanks to their care, Kang Ryang Uk could remain invariable in his patriotic stance without the slightest vacillation in the wake of the great loss.

## Clearing Up Apprehension

On March 23, 1946, Kim Il Sung published 20-Point Platform, in which he affirmed that freedom of religious belief would be granted. But some Christians still suspected that the communists might repress them in a different way. It was because they were misguided by the Japanese imperialists' tenacious anti-communist propaganda, the speeches and behaviours of the "revolutionaries" who had regarded religious believers with prejudice and enmity and, particularly, their own inveterate worship of America.

As a man of religion and senior government official, Kang Ryang Uk agonized over a way for dispelling their apprehension.

On May 25, 1946, Kim Il Sung had a talk with Kang over Christianity.

Kim Il Sung said to Kang that since there were many Christians

in Korea he would like to discuss with him how to treat the religious believers and work with them.

Hoping that he might get a solution to the problem that had troubled him so much, he readily accepted Kim Il Sung's proposal.

Kim Il Sung said: In Korea, Christians are most numerous in North and South Phyongan and Hwanghae provinces; Pyongyang can be called the centre of Christianity; so the work with Christians holds a very important place; skeptical about us communists, Christians are watching us to see what policies we will pursue and whether we will repress Christianity.

As Kang was struck with wonder at his accurate judgment, a thin acknowledging smile flashed across his face.

Kim Il Sung went on to say: If we are to build a fully independent and sovereign state, we must, first of all, closely rally the broad sections of the patriotic people and achieve a nationwide unity by forming a democratic national united front embracing all the patriotic and democratic political parties and social organizations; to build a new, democratic Korea, we must unite Christians, to say nothing of other sections of the masses, under the banner of the united front; and it is fully possible; we should make them absolutely convinced that everyone is free to believe in a religion and the religious believers will never be discriminated politically and socially.





Then he said to Kang that what was of paramount importance in the work with religious people was to treat them not rashly but patiently and prudently.

Even though he was a priest, he had never thought that way.

Hearing Kim Il Sung, the priest gradually realized the standpoint and attitude of true communists towards religion.

Kim Il Sung added: Religious believers must have their own motherland; we should clearly explain to the religious believers that in a colonial country they are devoid of genuine freedom of religious belief and only those of an independent, sovereign state can be provided with freedom of religious belief; by doing so, we can bring the preciousness of the motherland home to them and encourage them to love their country and nation and hate foreign invaders.

"Religious believers must have their own motherland!" he repeated, recalling the days when the Korean religious people were forced to worship the Japanese god and deprived of the names of their factions because they had lost their country.

Coming out of Kim Il Sung's office, Kang Ryang Uk felt as if he had been relieved of a great burden and the filmy haze that had dimmed his vision had been dispersed.

Later, he and other priests and elders with national conscience informed churchgoers of what Kim Il Sung had said that day. This greatly encouraged them to turn out in nation-building

effort. At the same time they intensified the work for them so that they could enjoy freedom of religious belief to their heart's content.

As a result, the religious believers who had worried that freedom of religious belief might be infringed on if communists took power came to realize their worries were groundless. Some of them said that the communists, unlike bourgeois politicians, were not concealing anything from the public, and prayed to God that He would bring only prosperity to their country which had granted them freedom of religious belief.

Sunday schools, bible schools and other theological schools operated on a regular basis, and churches were repaired, renovated or newly built. Ryongampho Church No. 1 and the Central Church were enlarged, and Sinam, Tasado and Musan churches in Ryongchon County, North Phyongan Province, were newly built.

The revival service held in Chongjin clearly showed how freedom of religious belief was guaranteed in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

In early July 1949 Chongjin Church No. 1 in North Hamgyong Province invited a priest in Sinchon, South Hwanghae Province, to a revival service it was planning to hold.

Having heard that the priest would attend the revival service, many Christians thronged into Chongjin. This caused traffic





congestion in the city.

Public security organs arrested some of them, whom they thought were responsible for it.

Kang Ryang Uk, who was a senior official of the Federation of Christians, was at a loss what to do with it.

Learning about this, Kim Il Sung took relevant measures for the success of the revival service.

He met the chairman of the Central Committee of the federation, and told him that Christians were to blame for the traffic disturbance, but it was wrong to forbid the revival service.

Then he telephoned a senior official of the Ministry of the Interior, and told him: The Christians were wrong in disturbing traffic, but it was an error to hinder their revival service; even if the Constitution stipulates freedom of religious belief, we may lose a broad section of the masses if you who are responsible for law enforcement work this way.

He ordered him to tell the Chongjin internal affairs station to maintain traffic orders but not to hinder the revival service, and take necessary steps to prevent similar things from happening in other provinces, cities and counties.

Consequently, the North Hamgyong Provincial Committee of the Christian Federation of Korea held a rally of Christians in Chongjin and the revival service, at which the priest from Sinchon called upon them to strive for the prosperity of the country.

Whenever he recalled those days, Kang Ryang Uk would tell in deep emotions that thanks to Kim Il Sung's meticulous concern, genuine freedom of religious belief could be provided in Korea after its liberation.



# 2. ASSIGNED WITH IMPORTANT PUBLIC POSTS

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## As the First Secretary-General of the People's Committee

When he was alive, Kang Ryang Uk would ask his children to bring vol. 2 of Kim Il Sung's *Works* in his study once or twice every year.

The book contains a speech made by Kim Il Sung on February 8, 1946.

While reading the speech over and over again, Kang would recall that emotive day.

It was also the day when he was elected the first secretary-general of the people's committee.

Since then, he devoted his everything to the prosperity of the country and nation for nearly 40 years.

He could never forget the emotion of that day.

He remembered that particularly happy and meaningful day, and would recall that day even in the last days of his life while reading the speech by Kim Il Sung.

The Korean people who turned out to build a new country in high spirits wanted their genuine government in the liberated country.

Deprived of their country by the Japanese imperialists and subjected to national contempt, insult, exploitation and oppression,





they had keenly felt how miserable a ruined nation was.

In November 1945, Kim Il Sung set forth the task of forming a central power organ in the country.

As part of the work of forming the organ, local people's committees were organized first, and, on the basis of this, people's committees were organized in a way of convening people's assemblies of different levels and electing their members.

On November 19, 1945, the Ten Administrative Bureaus were organized as provisional executive bodies in different fields to guide the activities of the local government organs in a unified way and realize economic ties among provinces.

A preliminary meeting of representatives of democratic political parties and social organizations, chairpersons of provincial, city and county people's committees and directors of the Ten Administrative Bureaus was held on February 5, 1946.

On the basis of these preparations, a consultative meeting of representatives of the democratic political parties, social organizations, administrative bureaus and people's committees was convened on February 8, 1946, where Kim Il Sung clarified the necessity to form a central power organ in the country and the immediate tasks of the Provisional People's Committee.

Kim Il Sung said in his report that the central power organ to be formed in the meeting should be a provisional government.

That day personages of all walks of life were appointed to the responsible positions of the power organ irrespective of their political view, religious belief, political parties, class origin and past career: Kang Ryang Uk was appointed as the secretary-general, Ri Mun Hwan as the director of industry, Ri Pong Su as the director of finance, Jang Jong Sik as the director of education, etc.

There is an impressive story about their appointment.

Kim Il Sung studied much on how to form the new central power organ. It was because the ennobling mission to set up the new Korea as a free and prosperous country of the people would be assigned to the senior officials of the new central power organ.

In his mind were his comrades-in-arms who had traversed with him the bloody road of anti-Japanese armed struggle.

However, he assigned the above-mentioned personages to the important positions, valuing their national conscience and patriotic minds even though they were not tempered revolutionaries.

Kim Il Sung's appointment of Kang Ryang Uk to the position of the secretary-general of the central power organ was an expression of his broad magnanimity to join hands with anyone who cherished patriotism and of his warm love to make him take the road of patriotism for the country and nation.

On hearing the news that he was appointed as the secretary-general of the central power organ, the Christians were happy as if it were an auspicious event of their own, and made up their minds to





follow the line of nation building put forward by Kim Il Sung.

The road of building a new nation was beset with many difficulties.

The biggest problem was that over 2.3 million people were illiterate owing to the Japanese imperialist policy of keeping the Korean people to ignorance.

It constituted a big obstacle in making them participate in the political life and enlisting them to the building of a new country.

Kim Il Sung regarded anti-illiteracy campaign as one of the most important tasks of nation building, and aroused the entire population to it.

One day when the anti-illiteracy campaign was at its height, Kim Il Sung met Kang Ryang Uk and expressed his regret that there was not a proper factory producing pencils in the country because of Japanese imperialist colonial rule, adding that there was a big demand for pencils both for anti-illiteracy campaign and education of the millions of children.

Kang Ryang Uk was very much moved to see Kim Il Sung who was so worried about such a minor issue as that of pencils.

One day Kim Il Sung was told by Kim Jong Suk that there was a small factory producing pencils manually.

It was run by Song Tae Gwan, a private businessman.

He had set up a factory by the Pothong River, and was producing pencils.

Kim Il Sung was very pleased.

He visited the factory, and expressed his pleasure about the fact that the pencils were made by the Korean workers themselves even though there were some defects.

When he was leaving the factory, he encouraged Song to produce many pencils and to do other businesses as well, saying that one should not expect too much on the first attempt, and that the state would provide him with a big building, solve the problem of transport and assign a certain portion of woods to his factory.

After the visit, Kim Il Sung called Kang Ryang Uk, and said: As it is difficult to build state-owned pencil factories at the moment, we should encourage the private businesses to increase pencil production; we should help the pencil factory by the Pothong River.

On February 20, 1946, a few days later, Kim Il Sung convened a meeting, in which pencil production was discussed as one of its agenda items. He specified what needed to be done for the production of pencils, saying that this was not simply a matter of business and that it was fundamental in educating children to be excellent talents for the country.

Next day Kim Il Sung called Kang Ryang Uk, and instructed that a building should be provided for Song's pencil factory.

And some days later, he sent the factory a new truck, which was a very rare thing at that time. Now the factory was able to remarkably increase pencil production.





The days of solving the problem of pencils made Kang Ryang Uk realize the wisdom of Kim Il Sung who was seeing the future of a powerful nation in pencils.

Kim Il Sung paid attention so that Kang Ryang Uk worked with state-wide vision.

One day, when the land reform was under way, a priest from the then Ryonggang County in South Phyongan Province came to meet Kang Ryang Uk.

The visitor told him that his small orchard was confiscated and he was to be expelled from the place where he was living just because he was a Christian priest.

Kang Ryang Uk was aware that the man had bought a small orchard for a living before liberation.

Kang Ryang Uk thought that he could not be a man to be thrown away, and went to Kim Il Sung.

On hearing the whole story, Kim Il Sung asked his opinion.

Kang Ryang Uk replied that it may owe to the prejudice of the local officials.

Kim Il Sung affirmed his opinion, saying that some officials had interpreted the land reform in their own way and implemented it in a distorted manner.

And he continued: This shows that some officials are not aware of the essence of our Party's policy and that they lack experience and education; there may be some mistakes while enforcing the land

reform; the point is that we must find out and correct those mistakes before it is too late; it is good of you to have found out the problem in time and reported it; I think it would be a good idea to issue a document in the name of the Provisional People's Committee to the effect that the confiscated orchard should be returned to its owner and the man should not be expelled from the village.

Kang Ryang Uk immediately issued a document of the Provisional People's Committee and made the local officials correct mistakes in time and enforce the land reform without any further deviations.

Under the warm care of Kim Il Sung, Kang Ryang Uk accumulated the experience of state building one by one and followed the road of patriotism with confidence.

## Good Work Done on Sabbath Day

In 1946 democratic reforms like land reform, nationalization of key industries, labour law and law on gender equality were enforced successfully in the country. This completely eliminated the colonial and feudal characters of the socio-economic system and changed the socio-economic relations there. The new economic relations fundamentally changed the class relations of its society: landlords, capitalists, pro-Japanese elements and national traitors were liquidated and the working people became the masters of the





country and alliance between workers and peasants grew stronger.

With the success of the democratic reforms, the conditions for the next stage were created one by one.

Several meetings were held to decide on holding democratic elections for setting up a socialist government with a view that it was the most realistic and reasonable method to develop the people's committee of provisional character into a legally firm government.

A meeting, held in early September 1946, decided to hold elections to the provincial, city and county people's committees in all areas of the country on November 3, and adopted relevant regulations.

The entire population proactively supported the elections, the first democratic elections in the country, and turned out to the work to ensure the success of it.

As the day of the democratic elections approached day by day, the enemy inside and out resorted to every scheme to destroy the elections.

With their prejudice against the elections, some Christian priests collaborated with them and ran counter to the people's government.

They convened on October 24, 1946 a conference of Northwest Federation of Presbyters of the Christian Church of Korea, and made a decision that Christians would not participate in the elections.

And they put forward the so-called conditions that they could not

participate in the elections on the principle of separation of politics and religion, that they could not participate in any other events than religious service on Sundays of complete rest, and that holding elections on a Sunday was an expression of suppression against the freedom of religious belief.

And slandering the people's government, they even encouraged the Christians to cast their votes into the black box at 00:00 hours when the church bells would ring all at once.

When Kang Ryang Uk knew about this, he was worried about the negative influence this would have on the elections as only a few days were left before the election day.

Kang Ryang Uk called on them, and tried to persuade them to participate in the first historic elections after the liberation, but they dug in their heels.

Having grown anxious, he went to the office of Kim Il Sung on October 25, 1946 to get the latter's opinion.

On hearing from him the result of the conference of the presbyters, Kim Il Sung said: The reactionaries might attempt to frustrate our first democratic elections; necessary measures should be taken to block their machinations. And then he asked him if he had inquired into why they had decided to boycott the elections.

Kang Ryang Uk told him the conditions the meeting had put forward.





Kim Il Sung asked Kang Ryang Uk if the Christians must not do anything on Sundays.

Kang Ryang Uk answered that it was written in the Bible that Christians could do good things on Sundays and that they would elect ministers and elders on these days.

Kim Il Sung said: As you see, the assertion that Christians cannot participate in the elections on Sunday is something cooked up to oppose us.

Kang Ryang Uk came to the senses with the thought that alien elements who had infiltrated into the ranks of Christians were resorting to every machination against the people's government.

Growing serious, Kim Il Sung asked whether all the Christian priests participating in the meeting had opposed participating in the elections.

"Some of the priests masterminded it," Kang Ryang Uk replied.

Kim Il Sung said that vigilance was needed since some bad elements masquerading as religionists might attempt to destroy the elections.

A rather cold wind of late autumn blowing the fallen leaves was heard inside the silent office.

To Kang Ryang Uk, those who were trying to prevent the Christians from participating in the elections on the Sabbath day looked like those fallen leaves.

Kim Il Sung asked Kang Ryang Uk about the influential

persons of the federation, and said that he would meet them and other popular priests in Pyongyang.

Feeling a sense of relief, Kang Ryang Uk said half in pleasure and half in laughter, "I would be much obliged to you if you did so."

Kim Il Sung asked Kang Ryang Uk to join him.

On the afternoon of that day, Kim Il Sung met over ten priests of Presbyterian and Methodist churches.

Kim Il Sung warmly welcomed them.

Kim Il Sung offered them seats and said: Though our country is liberated, we are yet to set up a genuine people's government; the people's government we are going to set up is a genuine people's democratic government comprising people from all walks of life, including intellectuals, national capitalists and religious people as well as workers and peasants; what do you think about the coming elections?

One priest said the elections were good as it would select the representatives who would run the country.

Kim Il Sung said in the affirmative, and asked if the rumour was true that instructions had been issued to the religious people not to participate in the elections because it was going to take place on Sunday.

Silence reigned in the room for a moment.

Another priest stood up, and said it was so decided because the





elections would take place on a Sabbath day although elections themselves were good.

Kim Il Sung said it was written in the Bible that good things could be done even on Sabbath days, taking some related examples.

Those present there were surprised to hear Kim Il Sung talking about the Bible for they had thought he might not be familiar with Christianity.

Kim Il Sung said with a smile on his face: There should be no reason why religious people cannot participate in the elections of people's representatives if they had thought the democratic elections were good; elections take place in churches to elect presbyters or deacons on the Sabbath days.

The Christian leaders could not say anything more.

Kim Il Sung continued: The enemy is trying to misuse the doctrine of Christianity because they are afraid, first of all, of the unity of our nation and in order to frustrate the democratic elections; you should not be deceived by the reactionaries, taking the road of betraying your country and nation; there would be no religion that opposes doing good things for one's country and people; nothing is more honourable than working for the good of one's country and people; I think our religious people also love their country and people; the elections to the people's committees are good and I don't see any reason why the Christians should not participate in the elections as it would mean they are doing good things on a Sunday.

The Christian priests dropped their heads.

Looking at them, Kim Il Sung said: The rise and fall of our country and nation depend on the hands of all the people; everyone, if he or she is a Korean, has the obligation to struggle for the development and prosperity of their nation; the religious people can be provided with the freedom of religious belief only when they have their own country; therefore, they should serve their own country.

What Kim Il Sung said with ardent patriotic mind struck the heartstrings of the Christian priests who were so stubborn and biased, and made their hearts boil with patriotism.

One of them stood up, apologized for being deceived by the reactionaries and said he would do his best to make all the Christians participate in the democratic elections. The rest of them said they would do so.

That day the priests stepped out of Kim Il Sung's office with light hearts.

But Kim Il Sung was concerned about the religious people who might be deceived by bad elements, remain indifferent to their country and nation and disgrace their life.

Remembering the exciting moment of that day, Kang Ryang Uk went to many places like Anju, Pakchon, Jongju, Sonchon and Sinuiju, explaining to the Christians the idea of Kim Il Sung and appealing to them to participate in the democratic elections.





On the other hand, the priests who had met Kim Il Sung persuaded the Christians to participate in the elections, informing them that the decision of the conference of Northwest Federation of Presbyters of the Christian Church of Korea was wrong.

At last, the day of the historic democratic elections came.

From early morning, election campaign squads marched along the streets, beating drums and blowing trumpets, and people danced merrily at the polling stations.

Among those who were heading for the polling stations were the religious believers hurrying with the pleasure that they could do good things on the Sabbath day.

With the whole country seething with excitement and pleasure, Kim Il Sung voted for the candidate of the worker origin at the 52nd sub-constituency of constituency No. 6 in Pyongyang.

The first-ever elections of members of the people's committees of provinces, cities and counties in Korea ended with success.

In the elections 94 religious persons were elected to the people's committees of provinces, cities and counties, and when the DPRK was founded in 1948, 14 religious persons were elected as deputies to the Supreme People's Assembly.

The religious people could enjoy the political freedom of participating in the government affairs as well as the freedom of religious belief as they had their own genuine motherland.

## To Be a Genuine People's Official

Kang Ryang Uk was fully determined to devote himself to the sacred cause of building a prosperous country, but was unfamiliar with many things.

As it was an untrodden path in history to build a people's state in liberated Korea, Kang Ryang Uk and other officials did not know what to do first.

It was Kim Il Sung who led them along this untrodden path to be genuine officials of the organ of people's power.

Entering 1948, they had to review the implementation of the national economic plan of 1947, the first national economic plan executed in Korea, and make the plan of 1948 a law.

Kang Ryang Uk and other officials, however, were at a loss for what to do.

On January 24, 1948, Kim Il Sung called Kang Ryang Uk.

He said: We need to have a meeting to review the results of the implementation of the national economic plan of 1947 and discuss the plan of 1948; the preparations of the meeting should be hastened; the meeting will deliberate the general state budget of 1948, approve it by a decree and discuss the issue of referring the draft Provisional Constitution of Korea to discussion by all the people.





Now Kang Ryang Uk had a fresh understanding of what the highest organ of state power was supposed to do.

He was full of confidence and enthusiasm. As soon as he came back, he called relevant officials to his room to inform them of Kim Il Sung's instructions and organized detailed preparations for the meeting.

The officials became well aware of what they should do, and started to carry out their assignments.

As a result, the meeting held for two days from February 6, 1948 conducted an in-depth discussion on the agenda items and ended successfully.

There are more similar stories.

When the DPRK was founded, the Constitution stipulated that the Presidium of the Supreme People's Assembly should conduct work with the Deputies.

Officials of the Presidium of the SPA started careful deliberation on this article.

*What does it mean that the Presidium of the SPA should conduct work with the Deputies? What do the Deputies do?*

The deliberation became intense, but there was no result as everything was so new to them.

Kang Ryang Uk, the then Secretary-General of the Presidium, decided to ask Kim Il Sung for instructions on this matter, and visited him several days after the First Session of the SPA.

When he entered the office, Kim Il Sung welcomed him with a broad smile on his face, saying that his visit was timely as he had been looking forward to meeting him.

Kang Ryang Uk reported to Kim Il Sung on the work of the Presidium after the First Session of the SPA.

After listening carefully to Kang Ryang Uk's opinions one by one, he was lost in thought for a while. Then he said: All the Deputies should have a certain occupation and be exemplary in every aspect of work and life as befits servants of the people; the Deputies to the people's power organ elected by the people are not bureaucrats domineering, lording it over the people and oppressing them; they should be servants of the people; they should have a certain occupation like other people; only then can they always live and work together with them, hear their opinions, and inform the state power in time of their most accurate opinions, thus ensuring that the state administers its affairs in a correct way.

Kang Ryang Uk deepened again his understanding of the genuine people-oriented character of the people's government, and made up his mind to ensure that the Presidium worked better with the Deputies so that they serve the people faithfully.

The founding of the DPRK sparked off the inexhaustible strength and passion of the people.

In the past, deprived of their own country, they had thought they were predestined to be colonial slaves, but now, with great pride





and dignity in being citizens of the DPRK, they created miraculous successes and innovations in all the factories, enterprises, farms and fishing villages.

Kim Il Sung saw to it that a new state commendation system was established, and in early October 1948 he gave detailed instructions with regard to the institution of the Order of the National Flag.

Kang Ryang Uk and other officials made careful preparations including stipulating the regulations on the Order of the National Flag and completing the illustration of the Order.

On October 12, 1948, a decree was issued on the institution of the Order of the National Flag 1st Class, 2nd Class and 3rd Class, and on December 21 that year, a decree was issued on conferring the order on scores of people who had devoted themselves to the anti-Japanese armed struggle and achieved extraordinary feats in defending the country and the people's interests.

The news was broadcast throughout the country by newspapers and radio, and the newspapers carried the photos of those who had been awarded the order and articles on their accomplishments.

Kang Ryang Uk and other officials of the Presidium agreed to hold the awards ceremony, the first of its kind in the history of the country, in a grand way, and directed all their efforts to ensure the success of the ceremony.

On January 8, 1949, the first awards ceremony was held.

He had been so moved at the historic moment that he often

recollected the day in his later life.

That day Kim Il Sung entered the venue of the ceremony with a broad smile on his face.

Kang Ryang Uk, the then Secretary-General of the Presidium of the Supreme People's Assembly, declared the ceremony open, and read the decree on conferring the Order of the National Flag on the veterans, who had fought bravely in the anti-Japanese armed struggle, and the officers of the Korean People's Army and the then Ministry of the Interior, who rendered meritorious service in defending the country and the people's interests.

After that, the orders were awarded, starting from the 1st Class.

After the historic ceremony was over, Kim Il Sung posed for a photograph with the recipients of the order.

Later Kim Il Sung attended several state awards ceremonies, encouraging the recipients to achieve more remarkable feats for the prosperity of the country and nation.

Under Kim Il Sung's meticulous guidance, Kang Ryang Uk could acquire all the necessary abilities and qualifications for an official of the power organ.



# 3. DURING THE DAYS OF THE WAR

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## Under the Warm Care

At the early hours of the morning of June 25, 1950, when many people were still in deep sleep, the ROK troops, instigated by the US imperialists, launched a sudden invasion against the DPRK.

When he looked back upon the days of the Korean war, Kang Ryang Uk used to say with great indignation about the enemy planes that had dropped bombs indiscriminately on innocent people almost every day.

They were so atrocious and desperate to destroy everything on this land.

At the outset of the war, the imperialists got 590 aircraft ready for the war, boasting that that number would be enough to end the war "within 72 hours." However, they were defeated successively by an angry wave of advance by the Korean People's Army. They increased the number of aircraft to 890 in July, one month later, and to 1 200 in September, two months later. They made sorties every day to strafe throughout the frontline and rear areas.

As a Korean poet denounced, the aggressors' brutal bombing turned Korea into an inferno, where even sparrows disappeared and all the families suffered bloody wounds.

On August 31, 1950, a bombing raid destroyed several





churches again and caused loss of lives in their neighbouring villages. Hearing the news, he was pacing the room with rage, when a telephone call from Kim Il Sung broke the silence.

He asked if there were any priests wounded by the heavy bombings.

Kang Ryang Uk calmed himself down, and answered, "Nobody is wounded, General. But the bombings destroyed many churches. The priests have been disillusioned with the United States as they have seen the destruction of churches."

Kim Il Sung said: It is necessary to make the Christians have a clear understanding of the imperialists; they took off the mask of "humanitarianism," the favourite word they are wont to say, styling themselves as "apostles of God," and drove the Korean people into scourges of war so as to achieve their aggressive purpose; the Christians should be taught with the fact that the imperialists dropped bombs even on the churches they had built for their missionary work; they should know that the brutal bombings by the imperialists completely destroyed the valuable assets our people have achieved at the cost of their blood and sweat after the country's liberation, and that the imperialists are not our friend but sworn enemy.

He stressed that measures should be taken to prevent the priests and presbyters from any harm by the bombings, noting that most of the churches were more vulnerable to bombings as they were situated on hills so air-raid shelters should be dug near them.

Officials of the Christian Federation informed the religious people of the details of massacre and destruction of the churches by the enemy's indiscriminate bombings. And Kang Ryang Uk undertook the task of digging air-raid shelters near churches.

However, the worship of big countries entertained by some Christians was so deep-rooted that they used to get together in the church instead of taking refuge in an air-raid shelter when air-raid sirens wailed. They were of the belief that the imperialists would not bomb the churches as they were the apostles of God, philanthropists and humanitarians.

The belief and illusion cost them dear.

The enemies dropped tens of thousands of incendiaries and bombs, burning down the whole of Sinuiju in a moment.

The enemies bombed the border city on Sunday when the churches of the city were full of Christians in a sabbatical service.

The bombers appeared out of nowhere, and dropped bombs and incendiaries even on the churches, and strafed the Christians who managed to rush out of flames crying for God. Hundreds of Christians in the first and second parishes died a miserable death at the same time.

Among the dead were a presbyter and his son burned to death in a kneeling position of prayer before Jesus Christ.

At dawn of one early October day, when the enemy's heavy bombing was still continuing, Kim Il Sung made a phone call





again to Kang Ryang Uk, and said that the priests should be evacuated because the churches were situated on higher areas and vulnerable to air raids.

Kang Ryang Uk soon took measures so that the priests could be evacuated to safe places.

Holding Kang's hands, the priests said, "Who has ever paid such great attention to our safety and taken such great care of us? General Kim Il Sung is truly our saviour."

His benevolence for Christians continued in later days.

As the strategic and temporary retreat began, Kang Ryang Uk felt somewhat bewildered by the new developments.

He had not experienced many hardships, and did not know what to do whenever the situations changed rapidly.

When he was at a loss, Kim Il Sung made a call to him. As if he had read his mind, Kim Il Sung told him to retreat to Kanggye with other priests.

It was his invariable trust in the religious people and order of love he made out of his desire that they would continue to walk along the road of patriotism.

Drawing strength and courage from his love and trust, Kang Ryang Uk and several other priests all retreated to their destination safe and sound, overcoming all manner of hardships and difficulties.

Since then, the priests regarded it as part of their daily routine to pray for Kim Il Sung's good health and victory of the DPRK in the

war under his leadership.

By January 1951 the enemy's much-vaunted "Christmas offensive" turned out a fiasco, and screaming that it was the "most humiliating failure in the army's history," they withdrew from the areas which they had occupied.

On their way to Pyongyang from their place of refuge, Kang Ryang Uk and other officials of the Presidium of the SPA met an official sent by Kim Il Sung in a suburb of Pyongyang.

The official told them about how the building for the Presidium had been prepared.

The day after the Supreme Headquarters had moved to Pyongyang, Kim Il Sung called some officials, and said he himself should decide the location of the Presidium on the spot because he could not feel relieved only by reading the map.

The officials were rather surprised, for the location had been chosen after his careful consideration. They requested him that the Supreme Headquarters be furnished first.

Kim Il Sung could readily understand how they felt, but made up his mind to go to the area. The majority of the officials of the Presidium were elderly, and he thought he should make sure that they could start work as soon as possible without any trouble.

He said now that the Supreme Headquarters had already started its work at the new location, the Presidium of the SPA should also be moved from Manpho to a safe place and on-spot survey was needed





to this end. He told the officials to prepare for the trip.

Kim Il Sung and his party left before dawn, and passed several ridges and valleys along the snowy and curved mountain roads before they reached a valley.

Kim Il Sung got out of the car, saw the area for a while and told his party that it was the place he had marked on the map.

When his car reached the ridge overlooking the end of the valley, Kim Il Sung got out of the car before others and gave a look around the geographical features.

Mountains blocked the north and two ranges stretched down from it blocking both the east and the west. The eastern range was so curved that it blocked even the south. Thus the valley literally looked like a wooden bowl.

Except on the south, the slopes of the ranges were rather steep and covered with a forest of tall oaks, chestnut trees and pines, which was so thick that the sky might be invisible even in summer inside it.

Kim Il Sung was very satisfied with the unique topography. As the valley was surrounded by sharply-sloped mountains and covered with a thick forest, it was difficult for the enemy bombers to spot a target.

Pointing the shoulders of the mountains on both sides of the valley, he said with a hearty laugh that even if a bomber spotted a target, it should dive from a low-level flying, which would result

in its snagging on them and crushing into pieces.

At that time, the sun rose in the east driving the last shade of darkness out of the valley. Kim Il Sung was very pleased, and said that the Presidium officials would like the place when they returned from Manpho.

He turned his eyes to the village at the foot of the mountain. There were rather big old houses with slate roofs.

On the yards were jujube, cherry and apricot trees taller than the roofs, which offered a glimpse into the happy lives of their owners before the war. However, the torn paper on the window lattices and the fallen bush-clover fences meant they were vacated.

Kim Il Sung said the houses should be used as temporary lodgings for the SPA Presidium officials.

After looking around the houses, he said that the houses should be returned to the owners when they came back, and the construction of the office building of the Presidium should start soon. He personally chose the location for the tunnel near the building site to be used as offices as well as an air-raid shelter.

Despite the grim war, Kang Ryang Uk and other officials were able to work without any inconveniences under the meticulous care and solicitude of Kim Il Sung.

From the outset of 1952, the imperialists intensified brutal bombings against the towns and farm villages than ever before. They even used bacteriological and chemical weapons in flagrant





violation of the international treaty.

On August 5, 1952, Kim Il Sung told Kang Ryang Uk that an air-raid shelter should be built so that the Presidium officials could work in it as the bombing went on day after day.

He instructed him in detail how to dig the shelter.

At that time, the shelter of the Presidium was not bomb-proof. It only proved useful against the machine-gun firing by the enemy planes.

Kim Il Sung said that a stronger one should be built, in which separate offices for the chairman, vice-chairmen and secretary-general would be furnished. He also paid careful attention to manpower needed for the construction.

Thus, in autumn that year the Presidium officials completed the construction of the air-raid shelter that had even a cinema, and conducted their work in the wartime conditions.

They convened the sessions of the Presidium on a regular basis, in which they oriented the activities of the power organ towards mobilizing all forces for victory in the war, and successfully carried out the tasks of legislation and state commendation.

Kang Ryang Uk used to recall the unforgettable days of the war when they had a pleasant time, free from any worries, at simple New Year parties in the presence of Kim Il Sung.

In 1952 and 1953, Kim Il Sung arranged New Year parties for officials of the Presidium of the SPA and extended congratulations

to the participants, service personnel of the Korean People's Army and all the Korean people.

The participants could not hold back their tears as they looked up to Kim Il Sung, who was extending his congratulation to the people before they did to him.

Under the great care and warm benevolence of Kim Il Sung, Kang Ryang Uk and other officials of the Presidium could contribute to achieving victory in the war by strengthening the people's power in the face of the severe difficulties during the war.

## Instilling Confidence in Victory

Confidence in victory in a war cannot be easily gained. It is possible only when the nation or country is led by a wise leader.

A war is a confrontation of iron, fire, ideologies, faiths and wills.

The imperialists enlisted over two million troops and a great number of planes, tanks, artillery and warships in the Korean war. They even threatened to use the atomic weapon. The military forces of the DPRK founded only two years earlier were incomparably younger than those of the imperialists.

According to the objective law of war, it was easy to decide the winner.

However, the law did not hold true in the war.





On July 27, 1952, Kim Il Sung called at Kang Ryang Uk's house. It was nearly midday when he arrived at the house in the suburb of Pyongyang. On hearing the car, Kang Ryang Uk and his wife went outside.

His wife was a step ahead of her husband. She greeted Kim Il Sung with delight, saying: "The whole nation depends on you, General. Why do you risk your precious life in the face of danger? We can't express how grateful we are for caring for us so much."

With a broad smile on his face, Kim Il Sung greeted Kang Ryang Uk's family, shaking their hands one by one.

Kang's wife was moved to tears. She met General Kim Il Sung after a long time, and her emotions surged.

Kang Ryang Uk, reproving her for discourteousness, led Kim Il Sung into the room.

Feeling the warm affection of General Kim Il Sung, Kang's wife busied herself preparing lunch.

Kim Il Sung had a talk with Kang Ryang Uk in the room.

As mentioned above, after they had returned from the strategic temporary retreat, Kang's family was living in a cosy house whose walls were thick enough to withstand the bombing, a house on the sunny side of a valley Kim Il Sung had personally chosen.

As the Secretary-General of the Presidium, Kang had to spend most of his time in his office, so he was not well informed

of the prevailing situations.

Not content with the newspapers which took several days to be delivered, he sometimes thought of visiting Kim Il Sung at the Supreme Headquarters, but gave it up because he might make a nuisance of himself.

That was why it was his lucky, long-awaited day.

After he told Kim Il Sung about his family life and the work of the Presidium, he asked without reserve about the armistice talks and the prospect of the war. Kim Il Sung answered his questions in detail.

He said: Now the military and political situations are changing in favour of our side; even though the enemy is making desperate efforts to bring the war to a conclusion, bragging about their "mightiness" and counting on their technical superiority, they are suffering from one humiliating defeat after another by the strength of our people and service personnel rallied firmly behind the Party and the government; during the war the Korean People's Army has been strengthened remarkably and the rear has also become secure; on the contrary, successive military and political defeats have placed the enemy in a terrible predicament.

Deeply engrossed in his explanation, Kang Rang Uk asked one question after another.

"The enemy's heavy bombing goes on. They are dropping even bacteriological bombs. What do they count on?"





"How do you think they will respond in the armistice talks?"

Kim Il Sung gave satisfactory answers to all of his questions.

He said: Driven into a dilemma suffering greater loss than they did in the Second World War, the imperialists have three options; one is to sign an armistice, another is to maintain the present state of confrontation and still another is to escalate the war into the Third World War; but they are not ready for the third option, a large-scale war; they have no other option than to sign an armistice; then why are they putting off signing the agreement? they are going to disguise themselves as "victors" by achieving so-called "honourable armistice;" but they will never succeed; we will never recognize the loser in the fight as the winner.

Kim Il Sung said with confidence that victory in the war was in store for the Korean people and they would surely win final victory.

His instructions reminded Kang Ryang Uk of what he had experienced during the strategic temporary retreat.

Officials of the Presidium of the SPA who retreated to Manpho, were staying together.

On November 19, 1950, Kim Il Sung called on them.

They never expected that he would come to such a remote mountain village, and were very pleased. Expressing sympathy for their hard life, he walked into the yard of the house which was used temporarily as a building of the Presidium.

They felt very sorry for not having prepared a better house

for him. But he reassured them that during the anti-Japanese guerrilla struggle, he used to stop by such houses for rest. He even appreciated that the room was quite warm. Sitting with the officials, he asked in detail about their work and living.

They all looked very tired after a long way of retreat and unsettled due to disorderly conditions. He told them about the situations on the front in order to encourage them.

He said: Now the situations are changing in favour of us; the Korean People's Army overcame the difficulties of the temporary retreat and has switched over to counterattack; driven into a dilemma, the enemy is fleeing to the south; Pyongyang will soon be liberated and so will the whole of the country.

Listening to what he said, all of them were beside themselves with great delight and excitement.

Kim Il Sung said that they should prepare to return to Pyongyang as the Presidium and all other central organs would go back to Pyongyang when it was liberated.

Then he talked about the work of the Presidium, in which Kang Ryang Uk was working as the Secretary-General. He said: It is important that the Presidium officials should carry out their mission properly; the first priority at the moment is the work of awarding state commendations to wartime meritorious persons; to this end, they should go among the masses to find them instead of searching through documents in their offices; they should pay





attention to ensuring strict observance of laws and regulations as required by the wartime environment and establishing a militant way of life.

Turning the topic to the work of the Christian Federation at which Kang Ryang Uk held a responsible position, he said: It is also important to pay great attention to rallying the Christians around the government; however difficult the work with them may be, they should be educated and rallied; we intend to form a united front and cooperate with the religious people who have a conscience and patriotism and support our government's policies; the most important thing is to eradicate the deeply-rooted idea of worshipping and fearing the US and to raise the spirit of national independence; Christians should pray for the wellbeing of their country and fellow people.

In fact, during the war, nearly all the churches had been destroyed and their members scattered. The Christian Federation had lost its vigour.

Encouraged by his instructions, Kang Ryang Uk made up his mind to carry them through.

After a while, his wife entered the room holding a small table for lunch. Laid out on the table were seasoned wild herbs, sliced radish kimchi and bowls of noodles. She looked very sorry for serving him such simple dishes.

However, Kim Il Sung said that noodles, especially Pyongyang

cold noodles, were one of the Korean people's favourite traditional dishes, adding: From olden times every region of Korea has its own specialties such as *sollongthang* (beef and rice soup) and *sinsollo* (a traditional dish in cooking brazier) of Kaesong, and Pyongyang was famous for mullet soup and cold noodles; during the anti-Japanese armed struggle I used to have noodles made when we happened to obtain some buckwheat or wheat flour.

That day he took care of every detail of their life in a harmonious family atmosphere.

Kang Ryang Uk was well aware of why he visited his house despite the heavy bombing.

He thought that Kim Il Sung visited his old teacher in order to encourage him to keep following the road of patriotism with stronger confidence in victory, no matter how difficult the situations may be.

A year later, looking at the fireworks display in celebration of victory in the war, he recalled the day and said to himself: *Dear General, we saw today on the day a year ago. We have won*.



# 4. ALONG THE ROAD OF PATRIOTISM WITHOUT INTERRUPTION

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## No Country, No Religious Life

The grim Fatherland Liberation War ended with victory of the Korean people, but the situation remained tense as ever and innumerable hardships and difficulties beyond imagination laid ahead in their struggle for postwar rehabilitation.

The whole country was reduced to ashes. The history of war had never witnessed such utter devastation.

It was not for nothing that the US imperialists had claimed that even a hundred years would not be enough for Korea to rise again. The allies of Korea also expressed their concern about its future.

Koreans suffered great hardships in their living; they were short of food, clothes and every other thing.

With a firm belief that as there were the Workers' Party of Korea, the people's government, the people and the territory a new life could be surely created however great the war damage was and however bad the conditions were, Kim Il Sung motivated all the people to the struggle for postwar rehabilitation.

Busy as he was, he always paid great attention to Kang Ryang Uk's life and work.

About 20 days after the war, on a sweltering day, he visited Kang Ryang Uk's house.





Kang Ryang Uk and his wife were so grateful that they ran barefoot out of the door to greet him. Having warmly greeted them, Kim Il Sung entered the room.

Kang Ryang Uk told him about his opinion of constructing the office building of the Presidium of the SPA.

Kim Il Sung said that there was an order of priority in everything and so was postwar rehabilitation.

Kang Ryang Uk was a little surprised.

Kim Il Sung said with a smile: Even if we may suspend the construction of office and public buildings, we should build first houses for our people who have overcome the sufferings of war; the imperialists claimed that completely devastated Pyongyang would not rise again within one hundred years; I am determined to show them the mettle of the Korean people again in postwar rehabilitation as they emerged victorious in the war.

By then, Kang Ryang Uk understood everything; why Kim Il Sung went to the then Kangnam Brick Factory straight after the military parade held in celebration of the victory in the war and why he advanced the original line of economic construction of giving priority to the development of heavy industry while simultaneously developing light industry and agriculture.

But he could not realize at that time that to know is one thing and to master is another and yet there is greater difference between to master and to apply.

In January 1954 he fell ill after several days of chill and shivering and could not go to work for two days.

On the 24th, having moaned all over the night, he took medicine in the morning. It was when he just got out of his bed feeling better after sweating that his wife rushed into the room to say Kim Il Sung had come.

Before he went out to greet him, Kim Il Sung came into the room, and said hello.

Kang Ryang Uk felt sorry to have failed to greet him properly.

Kim Il Sung said that he had come to see him on his sickbed. He looked very worried.

Kang Ryang Uk was very grateful yet sorry to him.

Kim Il Sung said he needed not feel sorry for that, and asked him how he was feeling.

"I took the medicine and sweated it out. Don't worry about me."

Seeing his bloodshot eyes, Kim Il Sung said: You should not make little of cold; you still seem to have a high temperature, and have to take good care of yourself; now that we have won the war, you should take treatment; you can do a lot work only when you are healthy.

Then he continued: This year we have launched into the Three-Year Plan for Postwar Rehabilitation and Development of the National Economy, aimed at reconstructing the economy devastated by the war and improving the people's standard of living; the plan





is huge and challenging, indeed; however, we must fulfil the plan without fail; only then, can we disprove the imperialists' claim that Korea would not rise up within hundred years' time and display again the true mettle of the Korean people; to this end, all the people should turn out as one as they did during the war; as in the past, we should firmly believe in our people; nothing is impossible when our people are motivated; the Christians are no exception; you have to exert more efforts to enlist all the members of the Christian Federation for the implementation of the Three-Year Plan.

Listening to his instructions, Kang Ryang Uk thought that there would be no life of the religious people without their motherland.

As the saying goes, people who have lost their country are more miserable than a dog in a house of mourning. Who will guarantee freedom of religious belief for those who are deprived of their motherland?

He recalled what had happened during the war. On December 28, 1951, Kim Il Sung had met Kang Ryang Uk in the office building of the Cabinet to discuss the work of the Christian Federation.

He had said that it was required to render great support to the front and further consolidate the rear so as to rally all the people around the Workers' Party of Korea and the government of the Republic in order to hasten the final victory of the war, and that everything should be subordinated to this end.

Kang Ryang Uk had realized that he had not been careful about

the work of the Christian Federation he was responsible for.

Kim Il Sung had stressed that there was no religious life separated from the country, from the DPRK.

Kang Ryang Uk had kept these instructions in his mind as an iron truth, recalling the pains imprinted on his memory during the days when he had been deprived of his motherland.

Before liberation, religious believers of Korea had prayed for being freed from national humiliation and contempt, extreme poverty and agony. However, what they had received in return was the worsening humiliation and pain.

In those days Kang Ryang Uk had been forced to indoctrinate the believers with the "Japanese spirit" and to hold services for praying for the victory of the Japanese army. The imperialists had even forced the Christians to donate the church bells to their aggressive war.

Only after Kim Il Sung had liberated their country by waging an anti-Japanese armed struggle for decades and established the people's government, could the Christians lead a new, democratic life.

In fact, during the Korean war many Christians had given up their religious life as they had witnessed the brutal massacre committed by the imperialists and realized that those from the so-called land of God were the sworn enemy of the Korean nation. Even the devout Christians, with a sense of disgrace for the slaughter committed by some of their fellow believers during the strategic temporary retreat, had been striving to render as much





contribution as possible to victory in the war.

Kim Il Sung had told him to lead the believers in a correct way so that they could have full confidence in victory in the war.

Before leaving the office, Kang Ryang Uk said,

"General, I am so grateful for your precious instructions. In those days of Japanese occupation, we, believers, never thought of receiving such sincere instructions. I will try harder keeping your words in my mind."

Looking back upon the day, he told Kim Il Sung not to be so worried about the Christians any longer.

Kim Il Sung told him to arrange visits and tours for the clergymen so that they could have an accurate understanding of the reality of the country and the validity of the government's policies.

"I am eager to work. Your instructions are very informative."

Kim Il Sung said gladly that although he had come with a worried heart at the news that Mr. Kang was ill, he could go back with a light heart now that he was feeling better and being confident in the work of the Christian Federation.

Kang Ryang Uk's wife, who had been listening to his instructions quietly in the room, got to her feet hurriedly, and said,

"Dear General, why are you leaving so early? It will be lunchtime soon. I will prepare a meal."

Kim Il Sung thanked her, and rose up after telling Kang Ryang Uk to look after his health.

He stopped Kang Ryang Uk from coming out of the room, and told his wife to take good care of her husband.

Standing outside his house, Kang Ryang Uk remembered his saying for a long time–there is no religious life separated from the country.

## Trust in His Old Teacher

In the mid-1950s, the situation in the country was tense and complicated.

Threatening the world with a "nuclear war," the imperialists raised a frantic anti-communist clamour. The modern revisionists, who were scared of it, gave up anti-imperialist struggle and took the road of compromising with the imperialists.

Worse still, the ROK, instigated by the US imperialists, was frantically preparing for a new war.

At the same time, the domestic situation was also difficult. Although the national economy which had been damaged by the war recovered in the main, the aftereffects of the war remained here and there and the people's living standards were still low. However, the people, tightening their belts, made strenuous efforts to step up postwar rehabilitation and socialist construction.

In such trying days, some impure elements lurking at important





posts of the Party and government made attempts to achieve their dirty political ambition.

In December 1955 Kim Il Sung visited Kang Ryang Uk's family that had moved into a newly-built house in Pyongyang.

Looking around the house, he expressed his satisfaction.

That day Kang Ryang Uk reported to him about the reality of the Presidium of the SPA.

At that time, some people who were holding responsible posts of the Presidium and their henchmen were pursuing their aim in a more blatant way.

Having carefully listened to him, Kim Il Sung said: I have already been aware of their bad deeds, but your report made my knowledge more specific; some people have been deliberately slandering you while picking a quarrel with the policies of the Party and state since the liberation of the country, but you have been consistently faithful to the lines and policies of our Party.

Kang Ryang Uk looked up to him in reverence, who invariably trusted and spoke highly of him despite all the malicious rumours.

Seeing him, Kim Il Sung said that he believed in and respected him more than anybody else.

Kang Ryang Uk remembered what happened a year ago.

The unsound elements, who were holding important posts of the Party and state, were trying to frame the officials whom Kim Il Sung had trained with great care. Kang Ryang Uk was no exception.

Of course, it was not the first time for him to hear such an allegation. They had been regarding him, who was not toeing their line, as a thorn in their flesh, and kept slandering him not only during the days of building a new Korea but also during the war. He was agonized to hear that he could not be trusted.

He had been proud of his warm love for the country and nation, but there was no way to prove his own innermost thoughts. Reading a sentence from the Bible that waiting in silence for God's help is a good deed, he wished for a new hope, but it had not brought him mental stability.

What bothered him more was the guilty conscience that he failed to help Kim Il Sung in his work as much as he wanted as the Secretary-General of the Presidium of the SPA.

In fact, he wanted to dissuade Kim Il Sung from his endless journeys not only when he left for the army units on the dangerous front line but also when he visited the damaged factories and farms in the post-war period. But he could not do so, for he thought nobody could take the place of Kim Il Sung.

In early November 1954, Kim Il Sung called him to his office.

Being unaware of why he was called, he entered the office.

Kim Il Sung welcomed him with open arms. Kim Il Sung could read his mind by his countenance.

Looking at him with considerate eyes, he said that some elements had spoken ill about him behind his back, but he had vouched for





him. He continued: No matter what others think about you, I trust you; as I fully vouch for you, no one can touch you.

Listening to the remark, he rid himself of all the mental pains. Later, Kim Il Sung kept guiding him along the road of patriotism, giving him instructions of trust several times.

Whenever he met Kim Il Sung, he was very grateful to him for his great trust.

While having a good time with Kang Ryang Uk's family, Kim Il Sung asked where the piano was.

During the strategic temporary retreat, they had hidden the piano in Chilgol as it was so big that it would be a burden. But the aggressors who invaded Pyongyang took it away.

It was Kang Ryang Uk's daughter who missed the piano most. She was standing near Kim Il Sung with a tearful face.

He told her to wait just a little until she would get a better piano. Yet it weighed so heavily on his mind that he said he would give her a violin in his own house.

Clapping her hands, she followed him.

Over the many years, the violin has been handed down from one generation to another.

But its sound still resounds in this land. It is an echo of Kang Ryang Uk's eternal praise for Kim Il Sung, who bestowed unwavering trust on him and guided him to become his eternal comrade on the road of patriotism. It is also a manifestation of the

unshakable faith of his descendants to advance forever along the road of patriotism under Kim Il Sung's leadership.

## The Truth Realized Once Again

One mid-December day in 1963, Kang Ryang Uk, called by Kim Il Sung, went to his house.

Kim Il Sung welcomed him and led him to the dinner table. And he said: Please feel at home; let's have a talk over dinner.

Then he inquired after his health during the period of his overseas trip, asking the result of the World Peace Conference held in Poland.

Kang Ryang Uk, as head of the DPRK delegation, participated in the World Peace Conference which was opened on November 28, 1963.

Kim Il Sung spoke highly of him for making efforts to have the conference adopt a resolution demanding an end to the imperialists' aggression and calling for support to the Korean people's struggle.

After learning in detail how the conference had proceeded, Kim Il Sung said that he had made a good speech at the conference, thoroughly exposing the aggressive and deceptive nature of the imperialists.





Kang Ryang Uk quietly said that he was not worthy of his compliments.

Kim Il Sung said: You were popular among the students in your days at Changdok School in Chilgol for you were logic; when I recollected my days at the school while fighting the guerrilla war in the mountains, I was always reminded of you.

Kang Ryang Uk, who was perplexed at his repeated praise, told him what he had felt during the conference.

It was not the first time for him to make his appearance in the international arena. What he had felt each time was that many countries and progressive figures of the world were rendering proactive support to the DPRK.

After hearing what he had to say, Kim Il Sung said that as this conference showed, the imperialists were being isolated and rejected throughout the world now.

He then cited as an example a statement by a spokesman for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the DPRK released a few days before.

Around that time Kang Ryang Uk, as a Vice-Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme People's Assembly, often travelled abroad as his country acquired an increased external prestige.

This happened when he, as a member of a delegation of the Supreme People's Assembly, went to Indonesia as part of visits to several countries in Southeast Asia for over a month from

early April 1964.

President Soekarno hosted a grand banquet for the delegation at the Bogor Palace.

When the banquet was at its height, Kang Ryang Uk said to the Indonesian president that he would sing a song to congratulate on the close relations of friendship and cooperation between the Korean and Indonesian peoples.

Attracting the attention of all the participants, he sang *My Country* in order to give a deep understanding of his country to the Indonesian people.

His song reverberated in the hall. Soekarno, with his thumb up, repeated the name of Kim Il Sung several times.

When the delegation returned to the homeland after its visits to the Southeast Asian countries, Kim Il Sung met Kang Ryang Uk, and earnestly requested him that he should take care of his health for he had to visit more countries in the future.

Having accepted his request as his trust in him, he conducted external activities more energetically.

One day in mid-May 1973, Kim Il Sung met Kang Ryang Uk and discussed the problem of dispatching a delegation to the presidential inauguration ceremony of a Latin-American country.

He said: A few days ago a delegation of that country visited our country; during their stay, the head of the delegation officially invited our delegation to his country's presidential inauguration





ceremony; I am going to dispatch a government delegation headed by you there.

In fact, the delegation of the ruling party of that country had been very excited after meeting Kim Il Sung. They said: Rabindranath Tagore, an outstanding poet of India, wrote Korea was a country raising its lamp. Again the lamp will be lit: if the lamp sheds light on Asia, it is President Kim Il Sung that is shedding light on the world as well as on Asia; he is the saviour of mankind; we should make the world know such a leader of the people, a world-famous great man; we will develop the relations of friendship with the DPRK by widely introducing and disseminating the immortal exploits of President Kim Il Sung and the DPRK among our people first.

Kim Il Sung, worrying that Kang Ryang Uk would make a long travel at an advanced age, said he would have to take a great trouble as it was a long journey and it was his first visit to that country.

Kang Ryang Uk was quite moved by his concern, but he did not know that his concern for him would not end there.

Two days later, not long after the sun set, the phone in his room rang. Holding it, he was so surprised. It was General Kim Jong Il that was calling him.

Kim Jong Il inquired after his health.

Kang Ryang Uk calmed himself down, and answered he was fine.

Kim Jong Il said that he should pay attention to his health

because he was old. And then he asked about the preparations for the departure of the delegation.

Kang Ryang Uk answered that the preparations were mainly finished.

Kim Jong Il gave his opinions on even minor issues arising in making preparations, and said: I believe that you will efficiently carry out this mission.

Kim Jong Il gave detailed instructions on ensuring the work of the delegation a success as there was no DPRK mission in that country, and asked him again to pay attention to his health as he would experience jet lag.

Cherishing the truth that the external prestige of a country and nation rises if their leader is great, Kang successfully finished his mission for over 20 days and returned home. Later, visiting various countries of the world, he efficiently disseminated the greatness of Kim Il Sung and the authority and prestige of his dignified country.



# 5. EVEN THOUGH YEARS PASS

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## Noble Moral Obligation

With a firm trust and ardent comradeship, Kim Il Sung encouraged Kang Ryang Uk to follow the road of patriotism to the end.

In the period of a strategic temporary retreat during the Fatherland Liberation War, Kang Ryang Uk greeted his birthday in Manpho, Jagang Province. He and his wife never thought of celebrating the day since the situation was grim.

That night Kim Il Sung called on Kang Ryang Uk without prior notice.

The road from the Supreme Headquarters where Kim Il Sung was leading the war to victory to Kang Ryang Uk's lodging was long and rough. Guessing that something urgent had happened, Kang Ryang Uk nervously greeted the guest.

With a smile on his face, Kim Il Sung said: I've come here to congratulate you on your birthday.

Very surprised, Kang Ryang Uk said: How can I celebrate my birthday on this day of war, General?

Kim Il Sung replied: Though we are in the middle of war, we should arrange a birthday party for you; the party may be simple because of the war, but the day will never be forgettable.





As it was the days of grim war and temporary retreat, Kang Ryang Uk's wife did not dare to think of arranging her husband's birthday party. As Kim Il Sung did not forget the day and came to arrange a birthday party for him, Kang Ryang Uk hesitated to take his spoon.

Looking at him, Kim Il Sung said: Please enjoy yourself; when we arrange your birthday party for you after winning the war, we will look back upon today with deep emotion.

On the morning of his birthday in the winter of 1954, a year after the war, Kang Ryang Uk's wife arranged a birthday party for her husband with their children.

However, in front of the table, Kang Ryang Uk felt, he didn't know why, something wanting, not pleasure

He thought for a while, and then prevented his wife from filling a glass with liquor.

"Don't do that. I don't feel like drinking in the morning. Maybe the General would come here today."

His wife, putting down the bottle in her hand, said in a weak and complained tone, "You celebrate your birthday by the lunar calendar, so your birthday changes by the solar calendar every year. That's why even the people around you don't remember it. So, how can the General who is busy remember the day?"

"Yeah. But he came to congratulate me on my birthday in the year when the war broke out as well as shortly after liberation."

Nodding her head, she asked him implicitly to invite Kim Il Sung.

"Shame on you. The whole country has turned to ashes, and the General is so busy these days more than during the wartime. What's more, how can I dare to invite him to my birthday party?"

"But, why did you think like that in front of the birthday spread?"

He did not answer, but actually he had a ray of hope. Kim Il Sung had come to his house on his birthdays without prior notice.

He remembered the winter day shortly after the liberation of the country, when Kim Il Sung came to congratulate him on his birthday.

His wife was the first to go out to receive Kim Il Sung.

Kang Ryang Uk told Kim Il Sung that the Changdok School days were still vivid in his memory as they were sitting face to face by the table after 20 years.

After looking back upon the days for a while, Kim Il Sung said to Kang Ryang Uk's wife: Madam, on occasions I still recall the rice mixed with ground beans you would serve me in Chilgol; you can't imagine how I enjoyed it; having been away from the homeland for 20 years, I could not thank you for it; please accept my thanks today.





Kang Ryang Uk's wife was moved to tears to recall the days when Kim Il Sung who would come to her house, calling her "Sukchon auntie," for she came from Sukchon, and she could not but serve him rice mixed with ground beans because her family was so poor.

"My family was so poor that I served you only rice mixed with ground beans, not proper rice. But as you say you are grateful for that, I do not know what to say. Those meals were never tasty."

She was delighted to have a chance for making up for her insufficient service for him in his Changdok School days.

That day Kim Il Sung looked back with deep emotion on his days at Changdok School.

After that day, Kim Il Sung continued his visit to Kang Ryang Uk's house whenever it was the latter's birthday.

Kang Ryang Uk did not dare to invite Kim Il Sung, but he could not help waiting for him.

Time passed, and evening came, but Kang Ryang Uk's wife did not think to arrange supper, uselessly making a noise with vessels and lighting fire to heat the room. The children apparently read their parents' minds, and did not ask for food.

At the very moment, breaking the winter night air, a long motor horn rang outside. A car was coming to their house.

"Isn't it the General?"

While Kang Ryang Uk opened the window and looked out, his wife and children rushed out. He followed them in a hurry.

Kim Il Sung, getting off his car with a broad smile on his face, exchanged warm greetings with them in the dark garden.

Kang Ryang Uk, who had reproved himself several times the whole day for his ungrounded hope, wondered why Kim Il Sung visited them.

Fathoming out his mind, Kim Il Sung said he was sorry for being late, and congratulated him on his birthday.

Kang Ryang Uk, from the bottom of his heart, said to Kim Il Sung that he did not know how to thank him enough for coming for his birthday in spite of a busy schedule.

Kim Il Sung said that he had planned to come earlier but was late because he was so busy. Looking round the family members, he suggested going inside for it was cold outside, saying the host should take the lead.

In the room, Kim Il Sung pushed aside the cushion Kang Ryang Uk's wife offered him, saying that the Korean-style floor was better for Koreans. And he asked her what she was doing.

When she hesitated to say, Kang Ryang Uk told him that she engaged in Women's Union work.

Kim Il Sung said that she had developed much, and that it was really good to engage in Women's Union work.

The woman, delighted, said that she was trying to do her





work but she experienced troubles because of her insufficient knowledge. Then, she asked him to teach her how to conduct the work better.

Laughing, Kim Il Sung said that she had to learn those she did not know, that she had to read political books including *Political Knowledge* which contained all the political problems she had to know.

She was so happy to have Kim Il Sung in her house that she said she would arrange supper only after Kang Ryang Uk had winked his eyes several times.

Kim Il Sung said: It is good that you have not had supper yet; I will be extremely happy if I see you receiving your birthday spread.

When the couple was very sorry that the foods were not so rich, he said he liked the simple foods, and helped the guest of honour to take his seat and his wife beside her husband.

After inviting other family members to the room, Kim Il Sung said: Although I have remembered your birthday every year, I have failed to come because of pressure of work; in the future I will come on your birthday every year.

Actually, in the periods of building a new society, the Fatherland Liberation War and postwar reconstruction Kim Il Sung had not forgotten the birthdays of aged officials including Kang Ryang Uk and would arrange birthday parties

for them and took meticulous care of their living, himself stubbornly dissuading the celebration of his birthday and having the same boiled rice mixed with other cereals as other people had done.

In particular, Kim Il Sung used to call him Teacher Kang Ryang Uk in front of the other people.

Kang Ryang Uk had once asked him not to call him teacher anymore, saying that the teacher was him who was taking care of and teaching the people of the whole country, not himself.

Kim Il Sung had laughed, and asked how he should call him.

Kang Ryang Uk had answered: I'm the Secretary-General of the Supreme People's Assembly and I'm of the same age with Kim Chaek, a close comrade-in-arms of yours; irrespective of what had happened in the past, you are my teacher, General Kim Il Sung, as you always teaches me something new and leads me.

Kim Il Sung, holding Kang Ryang Uk's hands, had said: Everyone has a teacher who taught him and led him, so it is quite natural that I also have my teacher; I cannot forget you even though the days go by.

Kang Ryang Uk had long been well aware of his ennobling moral obligation, so he was unusually moved that day as Kim Il Sung remembered his birthday and visited him.

That day Kim Il Sung personally put an order on the breast





of Kang Ryang Uk's jacket, saying that over the past 50 years he had done a great deal of work.

Looking back with deep emotion upon what had happened four years before, Kang Ryang Uk realized once again that Kim Il Sung was a peerlessly great man who regarded people as his teacher and lavished affection for them.

## Giving Light and Warmth

Light and warmth are the sources of power that make all the things in the world of nature live.

The sunlight that gives life to all the things leaves shades, but Kim Il Sung took care of his old mentor in every aspect of his life, encouraging him to work full of vigour even at an advanced age.

Kang Ryang Uk worked at important posts of the government of the Republic for nearly 40 years−the period of democratic construction for laying down the foundations of a new Korea, the period of the grim war that was decisive of the country's destiny and the vibrant period of socialist revolution and construction.

In these periods the man, who was not a revolutionary tempered in the protracted struggle and who was advanced in age, sometimes felt hard to work at those posts. But he followed the road of

patriotism straight forward, overcoming all the difficulties.

This story tells all the secrets.

On April 15, 1971, on his birth anniversary, Kim Il Sung invited Kang Ryang Uk and his wife to his house.

Welcoming them, who were extending best wishes, he offered them seats and inquired about their family members. He then told them that their son working abroad was working well in good health, and instructed Kang Ryang Uk to work taking care of his own health.

At that time Kang Ryang Uk was also in charge of the field of sports, but he was not full of confidence in this field. He had only been moved by the care of Kim Il Sung, who wished him to invariably follow the road of patriotism for the prosperity of the country and nation full of vigour even in his old years, not bending his young days' will of patriotism.

But growing old as the time went by was unavoidable; though he was burning his heart to do as Kim Il Sung wished, his physical conditions were not good enough.

That day he said to Kim Il Sung, "Mr. Premier, I am too old to work in the field of sports. In my opinion it would be better to appoint an experienced younger man to guide the field in my place."

Kim Il Sung shook his head, saying: Among our cadres, no one is well-versed and competent in the field of sports





like you; you should continue to take charge of that field; I will help you as best as I can; let us improve our sports splendidly.

People often say that Kim Il Sung's special features as a statesman were to look into the distant future with great foresight and make ambitious decisions, but seeing through the details of life of a man with great care and encouraging him was also his special feature as a great man.

Kang Ryang Uk felt the leader's wish for him to live youthful days with a patriotic mind overflowing in his heart.

He recited in mind a poem composed by an old-time poet who had been famous as a prodigy in his childhood.

*Flowers blossom even on an old tree.*

*It is young in heart, no doubt.*

A football game was planned to be played in a stadium that afternoon.

With Kang Ryang Uk's advanced age in mind, Kim Il Sung asked him if he would see the game, and advised him to take a rest at home.

Kang Ryang Uk said with vigour: That is the field I'm in charge of; seeing a football game is as good as taking rest; so please do not worry about me; only when I see many sports games can I think how to develop the work of sports.

Patriotism is expressed in action, not in artistic expression;

being loyal to one's duty for his nation and fellow people is a detailed expression of patriotism.

With this in mind, Kang Ryang Uk devoted all his passion to strengthening the people's power and developing the country's external work and sports.

Kim Il Sung lavished affection and benevolence on him, wishing that he would work with greater vigour in spite of his advanced age.

Whenever he met him, he said to him that what was most important for him was his health; once he found time and took the old man to a scenic spot to enjoy the day with him; when he was ill, he called a foreign head of state to inquire about the treatment method.

In late June 1973, on returning from his visit to a Latin-American country leading a government delegation, Kang Ryang Uk was called by Kim Il Sung.

When he entered his office, Kim Il Sung warmly greeted him, and said: During your visit, you ensured that ambassadorial-level diplomatic relations were established with that country; the credit must go to your skilful external work; you should conduct external activities in the future, too.

Then he gazed at the old man's face, and advised him to go on a holiday with his family for he had to be healthy to conduct diplomatic activities.





Only then did he realize that Kim Il Sung had called him to have him get some rest.

Grateful for his constant concern for his health, he asked him to reconsider his holiday, but Kim Il Sung told him to make preparations for the holiday as he had to conduct external activities more in the future and it would be difficult for him to go to other countries if he was not in good health.

It is said a man becomes sentimental as he grows old; he could not but shed tears.

A few days later, he arrived at a holiday resort with his family.

Kim Il Sung, who was giving field guidance in that area, went to the resort. He had dinner with Kang Ryang Uk and his family members, asking if they had felt anything inconvenient in their lodging.

When Kang Ryang Uk answered he had felt no inconvenience, he said: If there is anything you need, please inform me of it in time; the lake here teems with fish; I'll see to it that you are provided with a boat; from tomorrow, you can go angling: please enjoy yourself during the holiday period without any worry about your work; only then can the holidaymaking prove its worth.

The next day Kim Il Sung sent him a boat and fishing tackles as he had promised.

Through the worthwhile holiday life, which gave the man,

now nearly 70 years old, youthful vigour and emotions, he was relieved of the fatigue accumulated during the long trip to a foreign country, and could resume his work full of vitality.

The affection and benevolence of Kim Il Sung for him continued even in the last days of the latter's life.

One morning, a few days before the last birthday in Kang Ryang Uk's life, Kim Il Sung called him who was in a hospital.

It is said that no medicine is efficacious for a too old man, and his physical conditions were going from bad to worse.

Kim Il Sung had called him several times a day after he was hospitalized.

He said: You will be greeting your birth anniversary a few days later; your family members will feel relieved even a little if you get a little better.

He then took all the necessary measures. Thanks to these measures, Kang Ryang Uk could celebrate his 78th birthday.

When he was breathing his last, he told his children that they should be loyal to Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il, the greatest of all great men, in his place.

Hearing the news that he had died, Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il went to the place where his bier was, and expressed their condolences.

Kim Il Sung said in a tearful voice: Mr. Kang Ryang Uk was my teacher at Changdok School, so I have never forgotten him;





since our reunion after the liberation of the country, he liked to talk with me both in ordinary days and in grim days; whenever he happened to see a special dish, he tried to serve it to me; it must have been the mind of the former teacher.

After a while, he continued: The Vice-President would be 80 years old probably in the early winter of next year; it is quite regrettable; if he had lived some more months, he must have sat before the birthday spread.

That day Kim Jong Il said: Vice-President Kang Ryang Uk was President Kim Il Sung's teacher in the latter's days at Changdok School; but he always trusted and followed the leader as his great teacher and his father, not as his disciple.

The great leaders' memory of Kang Ryang Uk never dimmed in later years.

When the Patriotic Martyrs Cemetery was built, Kim Il Sung instructed that his remains should be reposed at the cemetery. When he visited Changdok School on April 20, 1990, he recollected him, saying: Kang Ryang Uk was my teacher at this school; I can still clearly remember him teaching songs while playing the organ; he was my unforgettable teacher.

## The Affection and Care Continue

The noble love of the great leaders, which had been unchangeable even with the passage of time and deeper than that of kith and kin, was extended to Mr. Kang Ryang Uk's offspring.

In the late 1950s, when socialist construction was in full swing in the DPRK, Mr. Kang Ryang Uk's son was to be married.

Kang Ryang Uk's wife, who had lost her children by the reactionaries immediately after liberation, was particularly pleased and happy. So she prepared even *Hapkunbak* wishing her son and daughter-in-law a happy life for long in the good society.

From olden times the Korean parents expecting the marriage of their children planted pumpkin seeds on the clear ground under the stone fence on a sunny spring day.

When the pumpkin vines covered the fence in autumn, they would pluck a young pumpkin and keep it in their houses, cut it into two pieces on the wedding day and put a blue string on one piece and a red string on the other. The cut pieces are called *Hapkunbak*. On the wedding day the bride and bridegroom put liquor on them and drink at the same time, a noble and profound ceremony promising unchangeable love between them.





Some days after the wedding ceremony, Kang Ryang Uk's family greeted another big event.

Kim Il Sung invited all the members of the family to his house to congratulate the newly-wed.

Kim Il Sung, who was waiting for them in the courtyard, said hello to them whey they arrived.

Kang Ryang Uk said he was wondering how to thank him for inviting them though he was so busy.

Kim Il Sung guided his family to his room, saying: I have heard you greeted a daughter-in-law and wanted to invite your family to have a chat, but somehow it is a bit late.

When they took their seats, he kindly asked the daughter-in-law what she did for a living.

For she was nervous as she was meeting him for the first time, she could not answer immediately.

In her place, Kang Ryang Uk said she was to become a teacher of the then Pyongyang College of Music after graduating from it.

Kim Il Sung said: It is wonderful; the college should bring up many talents to develop music and art; it can be likened to a "seed farm" for musicians and artistes.

Seeing the grown-up children, he added: I feel relieved to see that your children have all grown up and are working at the posts of revolution and your family will prosper with the new daughter-in-law.

After a while, he invited them to the dinner table.

He then said: I am very glad to have a dinner with your family; I would like to propose a toast to the health of you and your wife and to the happiness of your family.

Kang Ryang Uk felt sorry for being late to propose a toast to the health of Kim Il Sung, so he stood up and wished him good health.

Kim Il Sung expressed his thanks and told them to feel at home and enjoy themselves with the dishes.

He continued: Time flies; it is like yesterday when I saw them first in the liberated country; they have grown up and one of them has married; they say 10 years are enough to see the changes of the mountains and rivers and 15 years have elapsed since then; you have worked much in support of us since liberation; I hope you will be more active in the future.

Kim Il Sung paid attention to Kang Ryang Uk's wife, and asked if she was still working in the Pyongyang committee of the Women's Union.

She was grateful to him for remembering what she had told him some time before and said yes.

Appreciating the sincere efforts she had made to render a contribution to the country and nation while looking after her family affairs, Kim Il Sung told her to do her job well to mobilize the women of the capital city to socialist construction.

Realizing that the family members wanted to stay longer with





him, Kim Il Sung arranged a movie show for them and again wished them happiness.

One year later Kim Il Sung visited Kang Ryang Uk's house again, and looking round the house, he said: Now that your children are going to have their own children, you will need a larger house with more rooms; I was thinking about having your house built to be two-storied.

And he led Kang Ryang Uk's children to devote their talents to the development and prosperity of their country and nation.

One day the daughter-in-law, who was teaching at an art school, was called by Kim Il Sung.

While inquiring into the work of her school, he asked her how many pianos her school had.

When she told him the number of pianos at the school, Kim Il Sung took her to the pianos nearby, and told her, a piano teacher, to select one, saying that he wanted to send a grand piano to the school. And he asked her to play the piano.

She began to play the piano, and the room was resounding with a sonorous and emotional melody.

When she finished playing the piano, Kim Il Sung appreciated her skills and asked her which one of the two pianos she liked.

She said both of them were good.

Kim Il Sung told an official to send the ones she liked to the school.

In fact, he could have sent the pianos to the school in person.

But he had let her play the piano with the affection of her father who wanted the daughter-in-law of the Christian pastor to devote her talents to the development of her country and nation.

One day in October 1969 Kim Il Sung called Kang Ryang Uk's son and his wife to his house.

At that time the son was to leave the country after a few days as he had been assigned to work in a country in Eastern Europe.

He warmly greeted them, and asked when they would leave.

After hearing his answer, Kim Il Sung told them that the country they would go had a good climate and was good in farming, and discussed in detail about their work and life, including the issue of taking their children to the country. And he said that the foreigners would like them because his wife was good at playing the piano, and wished them success in their work abroad.

Kang Ryang Uk's son expressed his determination to devote his patriotic zeal on the road of achieving the development and prosperity of the country and nation, upholding the ideas of Kim Il Sung.

Kim Il Sung continued to pay attention to him so that he could follow the road his parents had taken for the country and nation.

Kim Il Sung invited Kang Ryang Uk's son to the meaningful meetings with foreign delegations.

On August 20, 1992, when he met a delegation of the National





Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America, Kim Il Sung told about Kang Ryang Uk.

And he introduced to the members of the delegation Kang Ryang Uk's son present there.

Kim Jong Il paid attention to the descendants of Kang Ryang Uk so that they could unswervingly follow the road of patriotism for the prosperity of the nation as Kim Il Sung had done to Kang Ryang Uk and his children.

Kim Jong Il would send birthday spread to Kang Ryang Uk's son and praise him whenever he achieved successes in his work.

When he was reported that Kang Ryang Uk's daughter-in-law passed away, he said that she had brought up many talented artistes while she was working as a teacher at Pyongyang Kim Won Gyun University of Music and Dance and took measures for her funeral.

Today the respected Comrade Kim Jong Un continues to pay attention to the descendants of Kang Ryang Uk as Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il had done.

Kim Jong Un got a report that Kang Ryang Uk's son passed away when the entire nation was still in bitter grief after the sudden demise of Kim Jong Il. He expressed his condolences, took measures for his funeral and made him blessed for ever as a patriotic martyr by burying his remains in the Patriotic Martyrs Cemetery.

Kim Jong Un is paying close attention to the descendants of

Kang Ryang Uk so that they could do their best for the development of the country as their grandfather and father had done.

The descendants and relatives of Kang Ryang Uk have this to say, “It is the obligation and duty of our family to repay with patriotism from generation to generation the trust and love of the peerless leaders who have brought us up in their embrace and led us to the road of patriotism.”



**Kim Il Sung and His Mentor**

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